

# LET'S Talk

WINTER 2005

HEALTHY BODIES • SOUND MINDS • A SAFE PLACE TO WORK

## World AIDS Day

WOMEN, GIRLS, HIV AND AIDS was the theme of the 2004 World AIDS day. According to UNAIDS, a joint United Nations program on HIV/AIDS, there are many ways in which HIV and AIDS affect women. Among them are:

- **Transmission.** In 2004, most HIV infections are coming from heterosexual sex, in which women are more likely to become infected than men.
- **Mother-to-child transmission** of HIV accounted for 90 percent of all babies infected in 2003. HIV also can be transmitted through breast milk.
- **Sexual violence** affects women around the world. It can be even more damaging when it involves the transmission, sometimes deliberate, of HIV.
- **Discrimination.** Women who have HIV may experience discrimination in their job prospects, economic and social position, access to health care and education.
- **Men** are the most common route of HIV transmission to women. In fact, most women infected with HIV caught the virus from a husband or partner.

If you would like confidential information about HIV/AIDS, contact the CDC National AIDS Hotline, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at **800-342-2437**; TTY, **800-243-7889**.

## HIV and AIDS: Are You at Risk?

IN 2002, MORE THAN 42,000 AMERICANS became infected with HIV, the virus that can lead to AIDS, a potentially fatal disease with no known cure. Knowing the facts about HIV and AIDS can help you protect yourself.

### HIV and AIDS Facts

AIDS — acquired immunodeficiency syndrome — is the disease you get when HIV — human immunodeficiency virus — destroys your body's immune system. Your immune system normally helps you fight off illness, but when it fails, you can die from diseases that people without AIDS would survive.

#### HIV can be transmitted:

- By having unprotected sex — sex without barrier protection — with someone who has HIV.
- By sharing a needle and syringe to inject drugs or sharing equipment used to prepare drugs with someone who has HIV.
- From a blood transfusion or blood clotting factor you received before 1985.

#### HIV cannot be transmitted:

- By working with or being around someone who has the virus.
- From sweat, spit, tears, drinking fountains, phones or toilet seats.
- From insect bites or stings.
- From donating blood.
- From a closed-mouth kiss.

### Protect Yourself

- Insist on knowing your partner's HIV status before engaging in sexual intercourse.



- Don't share needles and syringes used to inject drugs or steroids or used for tattooing or body piercing.
- Use male latex condoms. However, no protective method is 100 percent effective, and condom use can't guarantee absolute protection.
- Don't share razors or toothbrushes.
- If you are exposed to someone else's blood, assume it is potentially infectious and treat it accordingly.

### See a Doctor

The only way to know for sure if you're infected with HIV is to be tested. For HIV counseling and confidential testing information, call the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National HIV/AIDS Hotline at **800-342-2437**.

Sources: CDC National AIDS Hotline, 800-342-2437; CDC Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention, [www.cdc.gov/hiv](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv); [www.aidsinfo.nih.gov](http://www.aidsinfo.nih.gov); and [www.cdc.gov/hiv/general.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/general.htm).

what's new

## Late-Breaking Health News

### **SOFT DRINKS INCREASE DIABETES RISK.**

**An eight-year study of 91,249 women found those who drank higher amounts of sugar-sweetened beverages had an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes and gaining weight. The study was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.**

Soft drinks are the leading source of added sugar in the U.S. diet and may increase the risk for diabetes because they contain large amounts of high-fructose corn syrup, which raises blood glucose in the same way as sucrose does.

The study found women consuming one or more sugar-sweetened soft drinks per day had an 83 percent increased risk for type 2 diabetes, compared with those who consumed less than one of these beverages per month.

**Nine controllable risk factors are responsible for 90 percent of heart attacks,** according to the results of an international study of 30,000 people from 52 countries published online by *The Lancet*. Cardiovascular disease is estimated to be the biggest cause of death and disability worldwide.

According to the study, the controllable risk factors were smoking, high blood pressure, diabetes, abdominal obesity, diet, level of physical activity, alcohol consumption, cholesterol level and stress.

The two factors identified from the study as carrying the highest risk were smoking (risk value of 2.9 — nearly three times the risk for heart attack for smokers compared with those who had never smoked) and high cholesterol (risk value 3.25).



Other important risk factors for heart attack were stress, diabetes, high blood pressure and abdominal obesity.

### **Methamphetamine is fast finding its way into the workplace, a new report found.**

Employers who screen job applicants and workers for drugs saw the number testing positive for methamphetamine rise 68 percent last year, according to Quest Diagnostics Inc., the country's largest drug testing company.

The report — which looked at more than 7 million workplace drug tests performed last year — shows the methamphetamine positive rate jumped, along with a smaller rise in positives for opiates such as heroin.

"These are the largest increases of any drug or drug class for as long as we've been tracking the individual categories of drug tests," says Barry Sample, director of science and technology for Quest's workplace drug testing business.

## VITALITY-ON-DEMAND

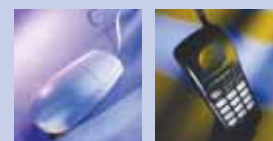
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- 550** Living With Arthritis
- 551** Dealing With Headaches
- 552** High Blood Pressure

# Relaxing Ways to De-Stress

WE LIVE IN TENSE, TURBULENT AND STRESSFUL TIMES.

"But you can easily avoid adding to the turbulence," says Mike George, a meditation teacher and author of *1,001 Ways to Relax*. "In fact, you can become one of those people for whom the world has a great need: those who can stay calm in a crisis, cool in the midst of chaos and focused on the positive when everyone around you is inclined to reinforce the negative. If you can stay relaxed and calm, it helps others do the same."

Here are some of George's suggestions for de-stressing your life.

- **FORGET YESTERDAY'S MISTAKES.**

Today is a new day. Your mind has been refreshed by sleep, and there's no need to believe that yesterday's misjudgments or misfortunes will repeat themselves.

- **DECIDE TO BE HAPPY** today, no matter what happens or who does what. It's within your power to make this choice.

- **DON'T JUST DO SOMETHING, SIT THERE!**

Simply take a few moments to sit in stillness, gathering your strength. Give your mind and body permission to relax.

- **UNRAVEL A PROBLEM.** Most problems have a number of strands tangled together, often in complicated ways. You may find that identifying the pieces of the problem in this way leads to a breakthrough in working out a solution.

- **THINK OF REASONS WHY YOU CAN DO SOMETHING**, rather than why you can't — all it takes is a shift in attitude.

- **REALLY LISTEN TO PEOPLE.** By paying close attention to others, you stay in balance with them. Actively listen to what other people are saying.

- **BRING AN OPEN MIND** to new people, places and experiences.

"Your way is only one of many ways," says George. "Open-minded people tend to find more to enjoy and less to be disappointed or stressed by."



Barbara Floria spoke with Mike George, a meditation teacher and author of *1,001 Ways to Relax*, Chronicle Books, 2004, \$9.95. For more information, visit [www.relax7.com](http://www.relax7.com).

## How to Beat Cabin Fever

When cold or inclement weather forces us indoors, sometimes even the closest families find themselves getting on each other's nerves. Suddenly the house seems smaller, the adults are short-tempered, the kids are whiny or fighting with each other. Everyone seems on edge.

This is the time to get up and get out. People pay too little attention to the need to get out, to be active and to find something interesting to do. Here are some ways to get your family out of a rut:

- Go for a walk. It's a good way to be out and active and meet other people. (If the weather is bad, walk at a local mall.)
- Plan a mini-vacation, like a weekend or day trip. To break up a routine that's become monotonous, you need new things to look forward to.
- Invite company over. It shakes up the cast of characters, and children are always better behaved around company.
- Create separate space: Mom's night out. Dad's afternoon out. An outing with friends for the kids.
- Instead of just letting them sit in front of the television, engage your children with imaginative pursuits like arts and crafts, puzzle solving, thought-provoking games or helping you cook.



# Dealing With Cranky Coworkers

Cranky coworkers or bosses can make your work life difficult, but you can take steps to improve your situation. Follow this simple formula: Stop, look and listen, then respond.

## Stop

Don't respond to your coworker with sarcasm, ridicule or anger. This will only escalate the problem. And don't take your boss' cranky remarks personally; stress may cause some managers and supervisors to act crabby. Also, don't deplete your energy by obsessing about what you should have said.

## Look

Observe when the crankiness occurs. Do you notice it most during a certain time of the day or on a particular day of the week? Does it occur when the person is dealing with a lot of work stress or personal hardship? Take note of when and where the crankiness occurs to identify any pattern, which will make the grouchy behavior more predictable and less threatening.

## Listen

What's the cranky person's real message? Are you in any way part of the problem?

## Respond

Although some people may purposefully use on-the-job crankiness to get their way, others can't help themselves. It's a reflection of their inner turmoil.

**Here's how to give an assertive, yet compassionate response:**

### Step 1. Agree

In a neutral tone of voice, agree with any part of the cranky person's statement that may be true, and ignore the false claims.

For example, if your boss complains you don't care about the company because you turned in your report late, reply with, "You're right, I did turn in my report late last week."

### Step 2. Reflect

Next, reflect on how the cranky person might be feeling by saying, "You seem frustrated" or "You look like you're under a lot of stress." It will pleasantly surprise the grouch that someone else cares.

### Step 3. Ask

In a neutral tone of voice say, "I don't like to be talked to in that way because it sounds angry and disrespectful. Would you please speak to me in a calmer tone of voice?"

### Consequences

Cranky people often continue behaving badly because their targets remain silent. By responding, you'll make the offender feel somewhat uncomfortable, and most people won't make changes until they experience such discomfort.

If you take the above steps, you'll feel happier because you'll be standing up for yourself in a compassionate, respectful manner.

**As soon as you're given a responsibility,** communicate to your boss what kind of authority you'll need to carry it out. A good manager will appreciate that you're thinking about what you'll need to perform your job successfully.

*Men's Fitness, Woodland Hills, CA.*

**Never just shrug your shoulders** at one of your accomplishments. You've achieved something, so you should acknowledge your successful effort and reward yourself. The recognition you give yourself will motivate you to do more good work.

*The Everything Time Management Book by Bob Adams, Adams Media Corp., 2001.*

**To relieve tension:** Sit in a chair and inhale deeply. When you exhale, rotate your shoulders and spine so you're looking over the back of the chair, then grasp the chair back with your hands. Hold for a count of three. As you twist, imagine wringing all the tension out of your body like water out of a washcloth. Switch and stretch to the other side.

*First for Women, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.*

**Business letters that aren't brief** and to the point may not spark a prompt reply because it takes more time to write a response to a complicated document.

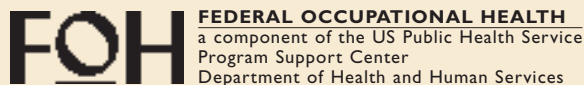
*Esquire's Things a Man Should Know About by Ted Allen and Scott Ormelianuk, Hearst Communications Inc., 2001.*

**If you're concerned with results,** rather than your career, you'll likely have more success climbing the ladder at work.

*Men's Health, Emmaus, PA.*

**Assign a closing time** to a meeting to ensure it doesn't drag on. A tight finish time will encourage participants to work more efficiently, with fewer interruptions.

*Time Management by Marc Mancini, McGraw-Hill, 2003.*



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